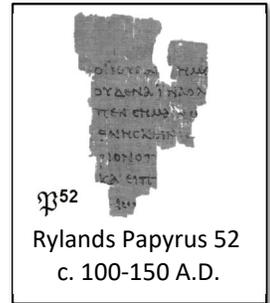


HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE, Week 2

Week 1 INSPIRATION How it was written	Week 2 TRANSMISSION How it was preserved	Week 3 CANONIZATION How it was collected	Week 4 TRANSLATION How it was translated
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Q: How was the Bible preserved for centuries and millennia after it was written?
 (especially if we now have none of the authors' original manuscripts!)

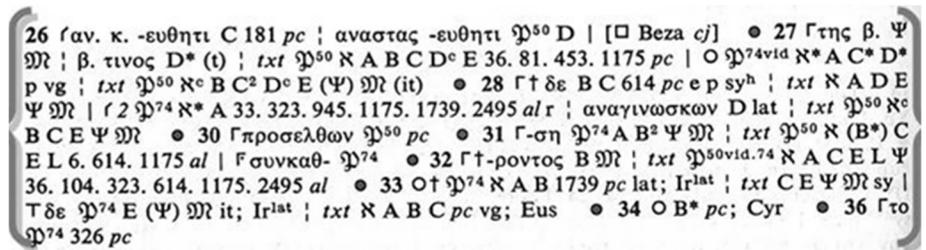


NEW TESTAMENT

- Acts 8:36-38

Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece

Critical Apparatus
 (for noting variants amongst
 thousands of existing
 manuscripts and fragments):



- John 7:53 – 8:11

(Significant uncertainties of the original texts are rare. Translators usually note when they occur.)

OLD TESTAMENT

1. Septuagint (LXX): Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, written c. 200-100 B.C.
2. Masoretic Text (MT): Hebrew copies of Scriptures, from as early as 800-1000 A.D.
3. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS): Hebrew copies of Scriptures from 200 B.C.–100 A.D. (found in 1940s)
 (see Isaiah 53 comparison on reverse)

Q: How can we trust the Bible if variants of the original writings still exist?

- Isaiah 40:6-8 (quoted in 1 Peter 1:24-25)
- Matthew 5:17-18

SUMMARY: In the thousands of existing copies of the Bible's original manuscripts, variants do exist, but significant variations are rare and never heretical. We can reliably know what the authors wrote.

“Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only 17 letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The three remaining letters comprise the word LIGHT, which is added in verse 11 and which does not affect the meaning greatly. Furthermore, this word is supported by the Septuagint (LXX). Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission—and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage.”

Norman Geisler & William Nix
A General Introduction to the Bible, p. 263

“Great Isaiah Scroll” (1QIsa^a) discovered in 1947 Dead Sea Scrolls.
Complete text of Isaiah, written 1,000 years before the earliest previously known text of Isaiah.

Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)		Masoretic Text (MT)
c. 300 B.C. – 100 A.D.		c. 800 – 1000 A.D.
(~1,000 years)		

Isaiah 53 comparison of DSS to MT

- Words: 166
- Letters: ~756
- Variant Letters: 17 (2.2% of the total 756)
 - 10 letters: spelling variants
 - 4 letters: conjunction variants
 - 3 letters: one word in Masoretic Text (אֹר, “light”), verse 11

“My son, be careful in your work, as your work is the work of Heaven, lest you omit a single letter from the Torah scroll or add a single letter, you would thereby be found to be destroying the entire world if the mistake alters the meaning of the verse and results in blasphemy.”

– Rabbi Yishmael (to scribe Rav Meir)
Talmud, Sotah 20a